# Crane News

**October 2017 - March 2018**

**By Soji Kashiwagi**

Since our founding in 2001, the Grateful Crane Ensemble has been honoring our Issei and Nisei ancestors by telling their stories and singing their favorite Japanese and American songs. As a non-profit theater company, we combine drama, comedy, music, and song to educate, inspire, and entertain our community and the community at-large about the Japanese American story. With this newsletter, our goal is to keep you informed about what we've done and what we're doing to keep our story alive.

## Upcoming Events

**April 28, 2018**
"Growing up Sansei" at Pasadena Buddhist Temple

**May 19, 2018**
Spring Far East Feast at Chef John Nishio's House (Sold Out)

**June 9, 2018**
GCE Singers to perform "Unsung Heroes" jingles at JACCC Dinner

**June 23, 2018**
"Nihonmachi" returns to the Aratani Theatre in Little Tokyo

**June 30, 2018**
"Growing up Sansei" at Tule Lake Pilgrimage in Klamath Falls, OR

**July 21, 2018**
Summer Far East Feast at Chef John Nishio's House (Sold Out)

**September 9 – 21, 2018**
2018 Goodwill Tour to Tohoku, Japan

**September 29, 2018**
Fall Far East Feast at Chef John Nishio's House

**October 17, 2018**
GCE to perform at Nisei Veterans Reunion in Las Vegas

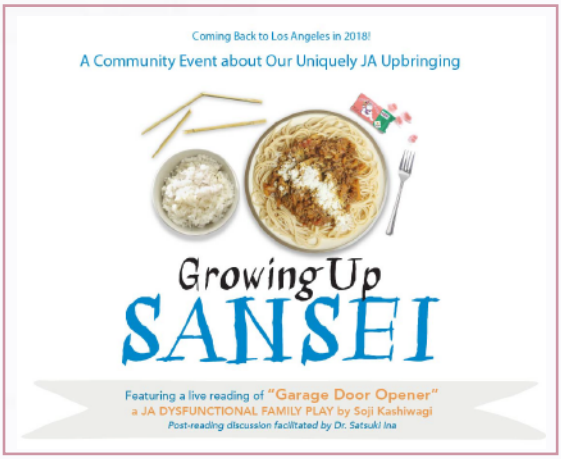
**December 1, 2018**
Holiday Far East Feast at Chef John Nishio's House (Sold Out)

## Bay Area Premiere

### Over 800 attend "Growing up Sansei" events in San Jose and San Francisco

October 21-22, 2017

After decades of growing up with silence in the home, Grateful Crane's "Growing Up Sansei" (GUS) events are giving Sansei and other Japanese Americans a place to share and talk about their upbringing, and the factors that have led to their family's dysfunction. At the Bay Area premiere of "Growing up Sansei," 825 community members (mainly Sansei) came out to the Buddhist Churches in San Jose and San Francisco on October 21-22 where they laughed, cried, listened and learned about why we are the way we are.

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## Bay Area Premiere of "GUS" (cont.)

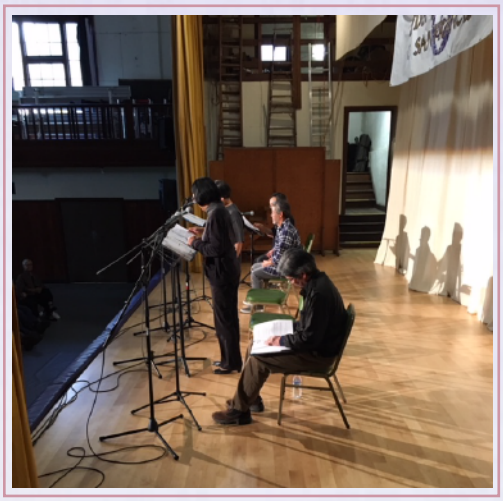
The event—a combination of a reading of my Japanese American dysfunctional family play, "Garage Door Opener," and a post-reading discussion facilitated by clinical psychologist Dr. Satsuki Ina—kicked off with Grateful 4 members **Michael Murata**, **Aimee Machida Angeles**, **Lisa Horikawa**, and **Emily Yoshihara** presenting their heartfelt renditions of "Sound of Silence" and "Hurting Each Other." Grateful Crane cast members **Kurt Kuniyoshi**, **Haruye Ioka**, **Dian Kobayashi**, and **Shaun Shimoda**, with **Ping Wu** reading stage directions, followed with an emotionally-charged performance that left many audience members in tears.

*A packed house in San Jose watches the Bay Area premiere of GUS*

After the San Francisco GUS, Dr. Amy Iwasaki Mass, a Sansei social worker who has made numerous presentations and published many articles about the psychological impact of the concentration camp experience on Japanese Americans over her 50-year-career, sent this message:

"Thank you so very much for writing this beautiful story. Most people don't fully understand how deep and complex the Japanese American family is. We have kept so many emotions, values, needs and desires under wraps, it's hard to know there is so much strength, complexity, and love beneath the surface. Family was/is the most important thing in the world for Nisei parents. But it was so hard to show love and intimacy in a way that Sansei growing up in America could recognize and understand. Learning about growing up Sansei from the Tanaka's (in your play) will surely open up new insights and self-awareness."

(Photo by Lisa Horikawa)



*The cast of "Growing Up Sansei" delivers an emotionally charged performance in San Francisco.*

The post-reading discussions in San Jose on Saturday (Oct. 21) and San Francisco on Sunday (Oct. 22) were both eye-opening and thought-provoking as Dr. Ina explained how the trauma our Nisei parents suffered during camp affected the way they raised their Sansei kids, and how that same trauma has been transmitted on to the Sansei and subsequent generations without anyone realizing what has happened.

The unexplained silence that most Sansei grew up with was finally explained as Dr. Ina described how many Nisei could not or would not talk about camp, and how they used silence to protect themselves and their kids from the shame and pain they endured. "They didn't talk about camp," many Sansei have said of their parents. Dr. Ina explained why, which has been the missing element in many Sansei lives. Why didn't they talk about it? Why did they raise us the way they did? Why are we the way we are? All of this and more was revealed during the discussions.

"The discussion with Dr. Ina was worth the price of admission alone," said a Sansei from San Francisco afterwards.

*The Grateful Four sets the tone with Simon & Garfunkel's "Sound of Silence".*

GUS was also presented on Saturday, November 18 at the San Diego Buddhist Temple with over 200 people in attendance.

(Photos by Soji Kashiwagi)

# November Premiere Performance

## Grateful 4 & Friends Variety Show debuts at Orange County Buddhist Church

November 19, 2017

Members of the Grateful 4—**Michael Murata** (Musical Director), **Aimee Machida Angeles, Lisa Horikawa** and **Emily Yoshihara**—presented the premiere performance of the Grateful 4 & Friends Variety Show on Sunday, November 19 at the Orange County Buddhist Church's Multipurpose Building.

*The Grateful Four started as an acapella group in the Fall of 2016 and has since come a long way to put on their own show.*

Featuring a wide variety of popular songs and music selected by the group members themselves, the Variety Show was an opportunity for the Grateful Crane's Yonsei singers to branch out and do a show on their own. They wrote the script, arranged all the songs and music and produced the show, with the support of Grateful Crane's older team members who were there to back them up.

*The "Variety Show" showcased the musical talents of the Grateful Four including arranging, composing, singing, and playing multiple instruments.*

*The Grateful Four was joined on stage by GCE members for the finale.*

Along with the Grateful 4, the show featured **Danny Yamamoto** on drums, **Gordon Bash** on bass and **Miko Shudo** on violin and ukulele. Additional performers included longtime friends **Keiko Harada** on taiko, **Jennifer Akamine Phillips** on violin, and GC members **Keiko Kawashima, Kurt Kuniyoshi, Haruye Ioka** and **Helen Ota**, who sang "Seasons of Love" with the Grateful 4 to close the show. Emily Yoshihara also performed a piece she wrote herself on the koto.

*The show included a trio including Michael Murata on keyboards, Gordon Bash on bass, and Danny Yamamoto on drums.*

In addition to the musical numbers, each Grateful 4 member talked about their experiences of growing up as a Yonsei, and how they came to be involved with Grateful Crane and the Japanese American community.

(Photos by Victor King)

## "Memories Concerts" begin at Nikkei Senior Gardens and Kei-Ai Nursing Home

November 2017

Funded by a grant from the JA Community Foundation, Grateful Crane members **Keiko Kawashima** and **Scott Nagatani** began a series of "Memories Concerts" for Nikkei seniors suffering from Alzheimer's or dementia at Nikkei Senior Gardens assisted living home in Arleta and the Kei-Ai Los Angeles nursing home.

*"Memories Concerts" will continue throughout the year serving this population of Japanese Americans in need.*

Performed last November for 55 seniors living in memory care wards, the 50-minute concerts featured favorite Japanese and American songs that evoked strong memories and emotions among the residents.

"Going in, we knew of the positive benefits songs and music can bring to this population, but to see it first hand was inspiring and deeply moving," said Keiko Kawashima.

Residents who rarely speak started to sing along to their favorite Japanese children's songs. Along with singing, residents at both locations clapped along to the music, tapped their toes and smiled as the songs from their younger days were performed. At Nikkei Senior Gardens, one Nisei man said, "I haven't heard music like that in a long time. I hope you can come back because it was really good. In my opinion, it was one of the best I've heard."

"Memories Concerts" will continue throughout the year at nursing and assisted living homes where Nikkei seniors with Alzheimer's and dementia live, as well as private homes where caregivers are caring for their Nikkei parent or parents.

# GCE in the Community

## Holiday Dinner at Nikkei Senior Gardens

December 8, 2017

For the fifth consecutive year, Grateful Crane has been invited back to perform Christmas songs and Japanese favorites at the Nikkei Senior Gardens holiday dinner in Arleta. Performed for over 200 residents and their families, the December 8 performance featured **Scott Nagatani** on keyboards and singing by **Keiko Kawashima**, **Michael Murata**, **Aimee Machida Angeles** and **Lisa Horikawa**.

*Grateful Crane delivers another entertaining holiday program at Nikkei Senior Gardens in December.*

(Photo by Soji Kashiwagi)

(Photo by Soji Kashiwagi)

## Grateful Crane performs at Sakura ICF Monthly Birthday Parties

December 16, 2017 and
January 20, 2018

Grateful Crane members **Scott Nagatani**, **Keiko Kawashima**, **Helen Ota**, **Kurt Kuniyoshi** (Dec. 16) and **Michael Murata**, **Aimee Machida Angeles**, **Lisa Horikawa** and **Miko Shudo** (Jan. 20) celebrated the birthdays of Sakura ICF residents in December and January with a variety of Christmas songs, Japanese classics and 1940's favorites. Attended by Sakura ICF residents and members of their families, the performances were well-received by all in attendance.

*Grateful Crane at the December monthly birthday party at Sakura Gardens ICF*

*Grateful Crane brings 1940's and Japanese favorites to Sakura ICF in January.*

(Photos by Soji Kashiwagi)

*Miko Shudo and her grandmother enjoy a day of music together.*

## Grateful Crane Rings in the New Year at the San Fernando Japanese American Community Center

January 6, 2018

The New Year got off to a good start with our performance at the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center's annual New Year party held at the Center on January 6. Attended by a mix of Nisei, Shin Issei and Sansei, the audience enjoyed our performance of nostalgic favorites performed by **Kurt Kuniyoshi**, **Helen Ota**, and **Aimee Machida Angeles**, with **Michael Murata** on keyboards. They especially got a kick out of Kurt's humorous renditions of "Kimi to Itsumademo" and "Jail House Rock."

*Grateful Crane celebrates the New Year at the San Fernando Valley Japanese Community Center.*

(Photos by Soji Kashiwagi)

# GCE Fundraisers

## Winter Far East Feast: Chinameshi the Way it Used to Be

February 24, 2018

Billed as a "mini-fundraiser" for Grateful Crane, the "Far East Feast" has become a popular, delicious and nostalgic journey back in time featuring our favorite "Chinameshi" dishes from days gone by at the old Far East Café in Little Tokyo. As with previous feasts, the February 24 event featured a tour of Chef John Nishio's backyard Japanese garden, a viewing of his Japanese American historical video, a nine-course Chinameshi dinner, followed by songs from the 50's and 60's as performed by **Scott Nagatani, Keiko Kawashima** and **Helen Ota**.

*Chef John Nishio meticulously recreates everyone's favorite "Chinameshi" dishes at the Far East Feast.*

New additions to this Feast included the viewing of an 8-minute video featuring John Nishio cooking JA food on the United Plates of America TV show, and the debut of the original recipe Far East Cafe almond duck which turned out to be the hit of the night.

Thank you to board members **Nancy Takayama**, new Kizuna board fellow **Kim Kandel**, **Mika Aoki**, **Aimee** & **Erick Angeles** and Nancy's cousin June Kuehm and her friend for all their help at this Feast.

(Photo by Soji Kashiwagi)

*The Far East Feast spread featuring the original almond duck recipe.*

*Grateful Crane closes the evening with popular songs from the 50's and 60's.*

## Fun for All at Grateful Crane's 10th Annual Fundraising Dinner

March 24, 2018

Memories from Disney movies, TV shows and the good times we've spent at Disneyland were celebrated at our 10th annual fundraising dinner held on March 24 at the Nishi Hongwanji Kaikan in downtown Los Angeles.

Attended by over 420 people, the sold-out event featured a popular Silent Auction with 115 different items to bid on, live jazz music provided by pianist **Hiro Morozumi**, a delicious bento dinner and an entertaining show featuring favorite songs from the 40's, 50's and 60's all the way through the 1990's and 2000's. **Helen Ota** once again served as our MC for the silent auction and the overall event. She also performed in the show as well.

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(Photos by Soji Kashiwagi)

*The cast and crew of Grateful Crane poses together just before the fundraiser dinner.*

Directed by **Darrell Kunitomi** with musical direction by **Scott Nagatani**, this year's show featured Grateful Crane singers **Aimee Machida Angeles, Jason Fong, Lisa Horikawa, Keiko Kawashima, Kurt Kuniyoshi, Darrell Kunitomi, Michael Murata, Helen Ota** and **Emily Yoshihara.** A new addition to this year's show was an All-Star band featuring Grateful Crane musicians Scott Nagatani (keyboards), **Hiro Morozumi** (keyboards), Michael Murata (tenor sax, trumpet, keyboards), **Miko Shudo** (violin) and **Dan Taguchi** (alto sax, flute, clarinet). Musical arrangements on several of our songs were arranged by Michael Murata. **Gordon Bash** did a masterful job on our sound, **Tim Toyama** was our follow-spot operator and **Ross Jackson** kept everything running smoothly as our production manager.

Special thanks to our long-time sponsors and supporters: **Frank & Sachie Kawana**, **George, Ruri, Lisa** and **Nathan Sugimoto**, **Jeff** & **Namy Folick**, **Frank** and **Betty Hiji**, **Hiroshi** and **Sadako Kashiwagi**, **Gary Kawaguchi**/Upper Crust Enterprises, **Linda Aratani**, **Ernie Doizaki**/Kansas Marine, the Family of **Fred** & **Michi Dohzen** and **Dr. Brian Machida**. Grateful Crane would also like to thank everyone who attended, our many volunteers and everyone who donated to this year's highly successful Silent Auction. Special thanks to our dedicated and hard-working board members: Chair **Michael Murata**, Vice-Chair **Nancy Takayama**, Treasurer **Cathy Tanaka**, Secretary **Ashley Arikawa**, **Jo Ann Hirose**, **Allen Goya** and our newest member, Kizuna board fellow **Kim Kandel**.

"I had so much fun," was a comment heard frequently as people happily left our event.

(Photo by Khanh Ly)

# GCE News & Updates

## Kimberly Kandel to join GCE as Kizuna Board Fellow

April 2018

In April, **Kimberly Kandel** will be joining our board of directors as a Kizuna Board fellow. Currently employed as the Communications Coordinator for the Ford Theatres, Kim is new to the Japanese American community and hopes to connect with her Japanese American heritage through her involvement with Grateful Crane.

A graduate of UCLA, Kim will bring her background in marketing and social media to our board. Welcome to GCE, Kim!

## Helen Ota Honored by Japanese Chamber of Commerce

January 28, 2018

At its installation luncheon held on January 28, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California honored long-time Grateful Crane member **Helen Ota** with its "Nikkei Spirit Award." Held at the Almansor Court banquet center in Alhambra, the luncheon was attended by Grateful Crane members **Soji Kashiwagi, Keiko Kawashima, Darrell Kunitomi, Lisa Joe, Aimee Machida Angeles** (and family), **June Hayashi**, **Mitzi Toshima**, **Nancy Takayama**, **Jo Ann Hirose** and **John** & **Susan Nishio**. At the close of the event, the Grateful Crane singers sang "Ue o Muite Arukou" ("Sukiyaki song") to send everyone home happy.

*Helen Ota accepts the "Nikkei Spirit Award" from the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California.*

(Photo by Soji Kashiwagi)

## Grateful 4 Sings National Anthem at the Los Angeles Clipper's Japanese American Cultural Night

March 27, 2018

On March 27 in front of over 19,000 fans at Staples Center in downtown Los Angeles, the Grateful 4 honored America and represented our community with a stirring rendition of the National Anthem before the Clippers/Milwaukee Bucks NBA game. Sung acapella at center court, **Michael Murata, Aimee Machida Angeles, Lisa Horikawa** and **Emily Yoshihara** belted out the song and received a warm ovation from the large crowd on hand. "It was really exciting," said Grateful 4 members after the event.

*The Grateful 4 and Soji at Japanese American Community Night with the Los Angeles Clippers.*

(Photo by Erickson Angeles)

## Upcoming GCE Events

### Far East Feast Schedule for 2018

Upcoming Far East Feasts scheduled for 2018 include Saturday, May 19 (sold out), Saturday, July 28 (sold out), Saturday, September 29 (seats available) and Saturday, December 1 (seats available). Please contact Soji if you have people who might be interested in attending. Seating is limited to the first 20 reservations.

## "Growing Up Sansei" is Coming to Pasadena on April 28

Presented by the Pasadena Buddhist Temple
Saturday, April 28, 2018
2 p.m. to 7 p.m. (dinner from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.)
Pasadena Buddhist Temple, Sakai Hall
1993 Glen Avenue, Pasadena, 91103

General Admission: $35.00
(includes reading, discussion and dinner)

For tickets, call Kathy Kumagai at (818) 790-0979 or kathykumagai@gmail.com or Shelley Yamane at (323) 351-0274 or shelley@museusa.com or Lori Hatakeyama at Pasadena Buddhist Temple at (626) 798-4781.

## GCE Singers to perform jingles for "Unsung Heroes" at JACCC Dinner on June 9

Back by popular demand, GCE will once again be creating and performing entertaining jingles for the JACCC's "Community Heroes" at its upcoming gala dinner in Long Beach. This will be the fourth year in a row where GCE has provided our jingles for the JACCC's heroes.

## "Nihonmachi: The Place to Be" Returns to Little Tokyo on June 23

Presented by Grateful Crane and the Little Tokyo Koban
A Benefit performance for Grateful Crane's 2018 Goodwill Tour to Tohoku, Japan
Saturday, June 23, 2018 @ 2 p.m.
Aratani Theatre
244 S. San Pedro Street, Los Angeles, 90012
Tickets: $35.00 orchestra
$30.00 balcony & groups of ten or more
For tickets, call Grateful Crane at (310) 995-5841.

## 2018 Grateful Crane Goodwill Tour to Tohoku, Japan

**September 9 to September 21, 2018**

**Fukushima, Minamisanriku, Kesennuma, and Ofunato**

Since our first two trips in 2014 and 2016, Grateful Crane has been supporting the people of Tohoku, Japan by singing songs of hope and inspiration for tsunami survivors in the hardest hit areas. Along with the singing of nostalgic and favorite songs to lift their spirits, we have also raised funds for a playground playset for a local park in Ishinomaki (2014) and provided a one-year supply of safe, clean bottled water for children and families in Fukushima (2016).

Seven years later, thousands of people in Tohoku are still displaced, thousands more are still living in temporary housing and many others are still struggling to recover physically, financially and emotionally. In 2018, our goal is to continue to honor the request of survivors we met in 2014 and 2016: "Please come again and please don't forget us."

The lasting and emotional impact of our trips was perhaps best communicated by a couple of residents who saw our performance at a Fukushima temporary housing community two years ago. "I am very thankful for these people who came all the way from the United States just for us," said one woman resident. "Due to language differences," added a male resident, "We can't communicate our thoughts to each other, but our hearts became connected. I feel very close to them. I feel happy and supported. I was happy because they were happy. They were happy because we were happy."

## Grateful Crane to Perform Songs for Nisei Veterans Reunion in Las Vegas in October

October 17, 2018

**California Club, Las Vegas, NV**

Members of Grateful Crane will travel to Las Vegas this Fall to perform for Nisei veterans and their families at their reunion's "Sayonara Luncheon." Songs from the 1940's, Japanese classics and Hawaiian favorites will bring back many memories for the vets and their families.

### ALSO THIS FALL: Special Concerts for Japanese American Caregivers

Thanks to a grant from Keiro, Grateful Crane will be providing a much-needed break for Nikkei caregivers by performing three special concerts in Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura counties. Since the majority of caregivers are Sansei caring for their Nisei parent or parents, the concerts will feature specially selected "Sansei" songs from the 50's, 60's and 70's. Time and Dates TBA.

### Volunteer Opportunities Available for GCE Events and Shows

Volunteers are key to the success of GCE. In 2018, volunteers will be needed at our events, assisting us at will-call, CD sales, backstage and with set-up and clean-up after our shows.

If you are interested in learning how you can help us, please contact us at (310) 995-5841 or send an email with "Volunteer" in the subject line to: gratefulcrane@gmail.com.

### Book the Grateful Crane Ensemble For Your Next Event!

Along with our shows and community programs, the Grateful Crane Ensemble is frequently asked to provide entertainment and programming for gala dinners, senior and volunteer lunches, anniversary and birthday parties, and Tohoku events throughout the JA community.

If you are interested in booking Grateful Crane for your next event, please contact us at (310) 995-5841 or send an email with "Booking GCE" in the subject line to: gratefulcrane@gmail.com

GRATEFUL CRANE ENSEMBLE
PERFORMING OUT OF GRATITUDE

## Grateful Crane Ensemble Mission

The Grateful Crane Ensemble pays tribute to the unique hardships and inspiring contributions of Japanese Americans in our country's history and continues the traditions of our Japanese ancestry through educational and entertaining works of music and theater to the Nikkei and broader communities.

## Grateful Crane Ensemble Board of Directors

Ashley Arikawa Allen Goya Jo Ann Hirose Kim Kandel
Soji Kashiwagi Michael Murata Nancy Takayama Cathy Tanaka

**Historical Advisor** Lane Hirabayashi, Ph.D.

**Executive Director/Playwright** Soji Kashiwagi

**Crane News Layout and Design** Michael Murata and Kim Kandel

## Contact Us

Grateful Crane Ensemble
P.O. Box 1600, Sierra Madre, CA 91025

**GCE Ticket Line** (310) 995-5841

**Email Address** gratefulcrane@gmail.com

**Website** www.gratefulcrane.com